Letter. no. 25. 17 Mar 41. Capt. J. H. Massey.
Monday. 6th Palestinian Company,
The Buffs.
Middle East forces

Sweet darling- Your 22nd letter arrived today - what Tiffs in the gap beautifully. Tells me all about your rooms at Ascot. The way these letters are coming at the moment is really wondrous. I almost look forward to the post with confidence. It is very nearly like being away from you, but at home in England or Ireland. The only thing is the difference in time - but now in March, I somehow feel that the clock has been put back, I am living with you in January. And now I must work even harder than before to keep up with your letters - I have only answered the last one with a letter card, & now another one is here. Last night I had a night out, which I will tell you about later on in this - Tonight I have had to be busy up to now, 11 o'clock. But I must make a start, before I go to bed. So I will be business like, & tell you all about the many question - Then go on about various things I have been going to ask you to do for me, but have always been too busy chattering to you, or telling you I love you, or how lovely you are, or asking you to tell me you love me. I think I did go into finances fairly thoroughly before, & have added things from time to time - but things have altered a bit now, I hope will, alter more, so I will give you all the figures as far as I know them.

First of all, darling, what comes in. The allowances, as you surmise, are paid out here - that has to be, because they vary, & always have to be claimed for. Will the exception, of course, of the marriage allowance 6/- a day which is paid in at home. I have colonial allowance ~~allowance~~, which

is 3/6 a day, & that is regular. Field allowance, at 2/- a day depends on where you are, & if you have a bed & furniture provided. Here I do not have it - nor did I as the P.R.I.D. which is a pity. All my pay, I arranged to have paid into Barclays, at home. And that will have been going on all the time, at 13/- a day. If Captaincy did not appear in General Orders until last week, & then I have to do 3 weeks in the rank, & then it is paid & the pay is antedated - in my case, it will be to Feb 1st. Captain's pay is 16/6. And then there is the hope of Major's pay, which is 28/6 - but I feel now they are going to make me do 3 months as a Captain before they move again. And then, of course, the rank goes with this appointment - & I suppose I may easily be pushed off somewhere again, & then my rank & pay would drop to Captain again. So we must never live at a Major's rate of pay, but just save the extra money.

So:- Association - £ 325 - per annum
Lieutenant - £ 237
£ 562.
Capt. + 3/6 on Lieut £ 64
Major + 12/- on Capt. £ 219
£ 845.

Marriage allowance £ 110.
Colonial " £ 64.

And as you know, pay is taxable - & allowances are not. If I get up to a Majors' pay, we shall be positively wealthy - but, in any case, we are not too badly off, & should

be able to manage quite nicely.

Now, about my expenses. I appear to have spent £105 since Nov 16th - which is £5-10-0 a week. As I told you before, I spent quite a lot in Cairo on presents & clothes & books - & of course on myself too - & since then, I have bought a waterproof watch, for £5. The other one was useless & would not go at all in this climate. You said you wanted to know my outside limit, & so I will give you £5 p.w. But - the allowances must come off that, for the purpose of you reckoning what I am taking out of Hoares Bank - so that makes it £3-15-0 p.w. So that you know how things stand, I have up to now drawn £110, which will be debited to Hoares - 3 x £30, which will be debited directly to Hoares: & 11 x £5, which will be deducted from my pay, from time to time & when the chit from Paymaster, Middle East, reach the Paymaster in England. I should not need to draw any more money for about two months, as I now have £27 in Barclays here, & March allowances to come.

Each time I draw on Hoares, or have an advance of pay, I will let you know at once, darling, & then you can reckon up.

But I feel pretty certain I shall spend less than £5 p.w, as I have been doing for the last month or two. Probably more like £4. Everything in the town is so damned expensive, & I positively grudge paying the prices. I only go to an odd film, & most days have a coffee & a piece of gorgeous cake in some café. I haven't had a drink in the town for more than two weeks. I find my free

time pretty well filled in, in writing to you, my sweet. And if & when I have any more free time, I must read - I have hardly read a word in the last two months. And then there is an odd invitation from time to time. And so the days pass, in a kind of a way. Don't, my darling, look upon Air Mail as an extravagance. Quite apart from the pleasure your letters give to me, they keep me up to the mark in writing to you - when I am writing to you, I can only smoke a few cigarettes & drink a little beer - so writing is a great pleasure & a great economy.

Tuesday. Jan 18th. That was as long as I could stay awake last night. I think that is everything about money, my darling. I hope you think I am being thrifty too? I certainly haven't spent less since I was 20. You are being marvellous, sweetheart. But please do not be too skimpy with yourself - you must have what you want as well as what you need.

Now, my other bits of business. Will you please ask my mother to send out my blues - jacket, trousers, Wellington boots, those funny collars, & the two white shirts. This place is lousy with regular army, they all wear them - & so I might as well have mine. And I most certainly will not use them again after the war. Besides, they are a change from khaki & drab. And will you ask Philpott to make me another pair of trousers - same material as the jacket he made in Sept - but not cut straight across the back, as I had my present pair altered in Sept. And to be sure & put leather facings at the bottom of the trouser leg at the back. And exactly the same measurements! My present pair are getting pretty shiny - by the time the new ones arrive, will be definitely shabby. It is impossible to obtain this material out here - they

only seem to have whipcord.

Your last two letters have been lovely, my darling. I have loved them. I have just re-read them now. It has taken me ½ an hour. The only thing was that the first was very happy & pleased with things – the next, which I received first, started off very unhappy & miserable – but cheered up the next day, when the snow had gone & the sun had come. You had another of my letters. I hate to think of you being so up & down, sweetheart – but I suppose it is inevitable. I am very much the same myself. But I have been much more up the last few weeks, with letters from you & plenty of work to do. And I am delighted that you like your rooms at Eileen's – but I don't expect there is much point in me saying a great deal about them – as you will have departed, by the time you have this. But the great thing is that during the last few weeks of having the baby you will be in a pleasant place of more or less your own, & no people to get on your nerves.

You told me that your love for me would never alter, & you asked me not to forget that. And you said – so long as you had confidence in me coming back to you, feeling the same towards you – & the baby. Dearest darling, it is lovely & wonderful of you to say that your love for me will never alter – & I never will forget. Lucky & blessed am I, to be the one you say that to – & I cannot think what I have done to deserve this, except to have loved you very much & very deeply, & to still do that. You can have absolute confidence, my own darling, that your love will always be treasured & valued & returned. I have told you so much, & so often in my letters, however (!) – how I feel about you. And

as time goes on, I feel this more & more & stronger & stronger
Never for one moment have I felt anything else, there is not
the slightest chance of my doing so. I feel so sure & confident
of your love now, my darling - there is only one possible
way in which I can ever be worthy of it, that is to love
you with all my heart & strength & to be utterly blameless.
And those I shall do & be. So you must always have confidence
in me, please. How I long for this war to end, to be
with you again. I know we shall be more deeply & truly happy
& in love than ever before. And I long to start this
life with you again. And oh my darling - you talk
about being exciting & attractive to each other. If you knew
how & what I think about you, you would blush. But your
photograph just smiles, looks so pretty, almost seems to
dare me nearly drives me frantic.
I think too, we are very lucky. Scores of men I have
met out here, really don't think at all - & just write a
2-3 page letter every 2-3 weeks. But then, I have not
liked any of them very much.
This war certainly does seem to be shaping now. What with
Bulgaria submitting, Turkey ~~Greece~~ & Yugo-Slavia
standing firm - & Greece ourselves having successes -
the marvellous American news. I feel things will happen
quickly - but other people think it will take a year or
two. If only next winter could see us together again.
The men had a concert on Saturday, provided by
the Jewish Soldiers Welfare committee. It was lovely & I
enjoyed it tremendously. It was the same string quartette

which they had before, with the exception that one violin was different this time was a young man of 16 called Segal (I am not sure of the spelling), who is said to be the coming violinist of the world. He was in the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra for a time, & Sir Adrian Boult is supposed to have said that he will be greater than Yehudi Menuhin - & Menuhin is supposed to have said the same. The leading violinist, was first violin in the Berlin Symphony Orchestra - & the cellist was also in that. We are really very lucky to have such a wonderful concert given to us. The men appreciate it very much - they are different to British soldiers, in that way anyhow. They love gorgeous music, Mozart, Mendelsohn, Dvorjak, & some Hebrew music. At the end they played God Save the King, another time, which I took to be the Jewish National Anthem, & continued standing to attention. I then made a short speech, finishing up with a sentence in Hebrew, which everybody seemed to think was a good show. I hope very much they will come again. Palestine has certainly gained from Nazi Germany's refugees - like so many other places.

Before the concert, the officers were invited for dinner, & we were very well entertained by eight gentlemen of the Jewish Agency - of eight shades of political opinion: apparently they have to be most careful who they leave out, & so it seems they were taking no chances on this occasion. But they were all a bit silent, so I seemed to have to take charge of the conversational ball all the time. Unless I have a care, you will find me quite a social asset by the time I come home. This is what comes of being a Commanding Officer. On the same day, I had proceeded onto a Hospital Ship which is in, & called on their R.A.M.C. Colonel. And so we were asked for lunch on Sunday - & two & two of his Majors came back for dinner. We had a

very good evening, & finished up again in the Colonel's cabin. And now we have been invited to their cocktail party on Thursday. These things help a lot to break the week up for me - & are quite amusing & interesting, & do not do away with much money. I am looking forward to having some books from you, darling. I wonder what the air book is - & I shall certainly enjoy Tolstoy's Childhood, Boyhood - Youth, as the moment I am reading - have I told you? - Macaulay's History of England - but very slowly. Frank Meeakin gave it to me, in Everyman's 3 vols, for Christmas - which was very sweet of him, because it was the only copy he could buy, & he wanted it himself for the Desert. It is quite the most wonderful English I have ever read. I must find more time, & push on.

It is very good of Frank Stamers to want to give me a present; our goodness knows exactly what I want. I lost a part of my Dunhill holder, have not been able to find another. I only like that size, & in black - & in Cairo, they only had long red ones; they have none here. A holder avoids brown thumb, & smoke less. And then clothes. I suppose - a nice well fitting cardigan, in grey, or fawn. Or grey socks. Or a tie or two. I don't know. You think of something darling. You have such good ideas. And what do you want, my ducky? Pants? Stockings? Jewels? I must stop now. It is 12-45. I never seem to be in bed much before 1.0. There's no time to sleep all night - I must write to my lovely darling. All my love as always, my sweetheart, & give yourself a very big kiss from me, & I send you kisses, on your lips - & all over the place. xxxx.

Always your very own Harry.

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